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Costs and Standards of Service*

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This article supports the thesis that every community would be ready to support a high quality of service regardless of the cost if they understood just what the program of service will mean to the client and to the community.

THREE quarters of a century or so ago, children's agencies were chiefly children's institutions offering shelter care. It was fairly simple to compare their expenses, or to compare the expenses of the few specialized agencies with them. The situation is now much less simple. With the development of a wide variety of services for children we have reached a point where relatively few agencies offer a single sort of service. It can almost be said that no agency is comparable to any other agency, for even when services are ostensibly similar there are frequently differences in intake or operating policies which make direct cost comparisons difficult.

Cost Determined by Many Variables

A statistician tells me that cost figures in social work are useful for only one purpose at present; they serve to raise a question as to why they are different, and what the differences actually represent. Even the absence, or relative absence of difference in cost cannot be construed to mean that agencies operate in the same way. There will always be differences in the philosophy and methods of social agencies in the same field. Two agencies with the same per capita casework cost for the same type of service to children may operate in very unlike ways.

The cost figures for agencies can never in themselves give a completely valid picture of the quality of service being given children, for outstanding supervisory leadership will always achieve results which would be impossible to the same staff working under average or indifferent supervisors. Many other factors could be mentioned which would influence the cost comparisons, such as the extent of training and experience of workers, the staff turnover rate, and agency policy as to process, content or recording. Even the degree of geographic decentralization of services may make cost comparisons difficult, and comparisons between different communities may be affected by variations in standards of living which are reflected in wage levels and payments to boarding homes.

Yet, in spite of these handicaps, we must begin to use more figures in comparing the work of various agencies. For if it is true that at this point figures serve only to raise questions as to why they are different, it is equally true that cost comparisons will serve to raise definite, specific questions regarding agency standards. Through securing the answers to the questions raised by these figures we can learn a great deal which will be to our mutual advantage.

An Experiment in the Study of Costs

About a year and a half ago the Department of Public Welfare in our state decided to begin to de-

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velop figures on operating costs for all private children's agencies. I was appointed to a committee to develop the basic reporting form. This form divides expenses into four types, Administration, Casework Service, Boarding Home Costs, and Institutional Costs. There are 45 subclassifications of expense which may relate to one or more of the four major divisions. Most of these classifications were taken from the standard Community Chest report form. Yet, many difficulties were encountered even with this relatively simplified schedule. There are for instance differences in accounting procedures, and differences in opinion as to how a particular item of expense should be allocated.

In undertaking this study, the State Welfare Department acted on the belief that there was some relationship between costs of care and standards of care. Like many other states, the state of Washington accepts partial responsibility for dependent children in the care of private agencies. The state had been paying \$30 monthly, on the assumption that this represented about half of the actual cost. This payment had been used for several years, and many of the private agencies were protesting that costs had increased. These agencies considered the \$30 payment entirely inadequate. The State Welfare Department believed that this might be true in the case of some agencies. On the other hand, the service given by some agencies was considered inadequate. The Welfare Department considered it probable that an increase in the payment rate would encourage these inadequate agencies to expand greatly, while such an increase would have very little effect on the better agencies. This was chiefly guesswork, as very little definite information was available. The State Department believed that in order to justify any change, more information was needed. The expenditure report form was prepared with the hope of securing some uniformity in reporting costs, and it was first used to secure comparisons for the first five months of 1947.

When the results of the study were tabulated, it was found that the costs of care, exclusive of administration, varied from \$28.96 to \$178.84 per month for the children in institutions. One agency was actually making a small profit on the state payment, while the payment represented less than 20% of the cost for children cared for by other agencies. I may add, parenthetically, that I believe that the agencies themselves were somewhat surprised at the extreme range of costs.

Relation of Cost to Service

Making all possible allowance for errors, differences in compiling the figures, and any other possible variables, it is still obvious that figures showing a range of cost from about \$29 to \$179 per month show some relationship between cost of care and the service given to children. It can be considered a virtual certainty that an additional expenditure of over \$100 per child-month reflects more concern for the children in care, and the provision of needed services for them.

It was quite interesting that there was a group of five institutions with costs ranging from about \$29 to \$48 per month, and that the next lowest cost was \$66.45. Thirteen agencies were between \$66.45 and \$101.37, with the largest interval being about \$6. Three agencies were above the \$102 per child-month level, with a wide range.

Without going into too much detail, it can be said that

1. the five agencies with low costs were agencies which provided physical care;
2. the middle group provided care with varying degrees of casework service;
3. in the upper group were agencies for which specialized service to the child was the major consideration.

What is the relationship between these costs and the standards of service provided? At this point, probably no one would want to answer that question in detail. I think there is general agreement that any child living in an institution needs some casework service. Beyond that point we run into an area where there are few accepted guideposts.

From the figures obtained, it was quite obvious that the Department of Public Welfare had been correct in believing that it would be unwise to raise the rate of payment for all agencies. It was equally obvious that the old, flat payment rate was unfair to the majority of agencies, and it seemed that it would be even more unfair in the future if the trend to specialization continued. The state, therefore, adopted a graduated scale of payment based on about 56% of the cost as shown by the survey.

This was done on the assumption that there was a relationship between cost and standards of care, and that the state was fully justified in paying more to an agency if the agency in turn gave more to the child. There was a further implicit assumption that the children were receiving the sort of service they needed. There was no further attempt to evaluate the service given. However, the results were so interesting that the state and private agencies agreed that the use of the form should be continued, as the basis for further investigation.

What Determines Quality of Service

Standards of care involve both the quantity and quality of care given. The sort of approach outlined above can give some idea of the quantity of service. It cannot give any definite idea as to the quality of service. Quality of service relates both to the function of the agency and the needs of the children being served. Quality is not necessarily in direct proportion to either quantity or cost. This may be illustrated by figures secured from four Seattle agencies, all of which are believed to be doing good work. To secure comparable figures, only administrative, casework, and clerical service expenses were included. The first agency was that of the King County Juvenile Court service.

It investigates complaints against children and deals with children who have been arrested. A moderate percentage of these, about 15% to 20%, are children arrested for traffic violations, needing only brief service. A fairly large number, perhaps another 20%, are children needing only very occasional contact with a caseworker. The cost per child-month for this department was \$5.64.

A second agency believed to be doing good work was the Children's Division of the County Welfare Department.

In practice, this is largely a foster-home agency. They do no juvenile protection work, and only about 30% of their service is for children in their own homes. The foster-home placements range from very brief, emergency situations to semipermanent care. Casework services are, of course, maintained during the placement and vary according to the child. The service cost for this program was \$9.21 per month, about 61% higher than for the first agency.

The third agency is primarily an adoptive service, although about one-third of the children cared for are not free for adoption and are given care in long-time boarding homes or in institutions.

A careful study is made of each child, and of the homes in which he may be placed. Supervision is maintained for about a year after placement. The cost per child-month for this program was \$19.56. This is more than three times the cost of the first service.

The fourth agency provides intensive casework service for emotionally disturbed children.

Caseloads are in the 15-20 range, supervision is very good, and children are given institutional care for six months to a year, followed by a period of less intensive care in family homes. The casework and related costs per child-month for this agency were \$28.08, nearly five times the first cost given.

Here we have four agencies serving children in the same community, with casework and related costs ranging from \$5.64 to \$28.08 monthly, yet all are regarded as doing good work. Obviously, we cannot judge the quality of the work being done solely from the amount being spent. Agencies with dissimilar

programs will have quite dissimilar costs for the same quality of work. The approach being used by the Child Welfare League in gathering cost figures from agencies having a common single or departmentalized function will avoid this problem. On the other hand, problems of wage levels and comparability of costs in various areas will be introduced. The figures obtained will be of real value only when the differences in costs can be studied to see what the differences in the field really represent, and what the effects of the differences are on the children being given care. The objective dollar valuations secured will have to be correlated with somewhat subjective evaluations of service standards before we have a tool of more than limited usefulness. This process of correlation may need a great deal of refinement.

Further Experimentation Needed

But if we are not yet at the point of being able to say that specific cost relationships indicate given qualities of service certainly there are a few general principles which are quite clear. In social work, as in most fields, you get about what you pay for. A good job is going to cost more than a poor one in every field of child care. It is essential that agencies should not spend money thoughtlessly, yet we must realize that any experimentation will involve some expense which is not immediately productive. Experimentation is to a very high degree the prerogative of private agencies. This is probably not an inherent difference between private and public agencies, though private agencies are generally more free to undertake major projects. Public agencies sometimes experiment vicariously, through encouraging the private agencies to do so, and sometimes they experiment directly. The leadership in any agency gets tired from time to time, and experimentation stops. Other agencies take up the burden, and progress continues. It is only through experimentation that progress can continue. The need for experimentation can be used, and has been used, as an excuse for poor administration. Yet it still is true that the need exists.

Needed High Quality Service Wins Support

We must keep in mind the difference between the purpose and the program for which our agencies were formed. The program is usually quite easily determined—it is to provide day care for children, or to place them in boarding homes, or for adoption, or to give group care, or homemaker service. The social goal is the same for all our agencies. It is to give children some form of care which is needed. Our society changes, and it is only by experimentation

and change that our agencies can keep step with the children and their needs. The point does not need elaboration. We are all familiar with bequests and legacies which were left with rigid restrictions which prevented change. They have been rendered useless by the changes of our society, by the outdating of the type of service and not by any cost factor.

Almost all private children's agencies are constantly faced with the problem of whether it is better to provide a high standard of care for fewer children or a lower standard of care for more children. I do not suppose this question can ever be fully resolved. We know that we can never give perfect service to each child in our care, just as the automobile manufacturers know that they will never make a car which will run a thousand miles on a gallon of gasoline. But we must try to improve our services to children just as the producers of cars try to improve their products. If there is any one thing expected by the American public, it is that newer models of anything will be better than the old ones—and the American people have never been very tolerant of poor care for children once they have understood the issues involved. As soon as they really understand that a new method of care will produce better results, there is insistence that it be made available. If any agency uses the excuse, for very long, that it cannot afford to give a high standard of care to the children it serves, it will find itself with even less money. The support which it had been receiving will go to some agency which provides better care.

Program Changes Must be Interpreted to Community

Some agencies are reluctant to accept modern standards of care. They fear that the public will neither understand nor support the costs involved in a change of program. If an agency were suddenly to change its program without public explanation, there would naturally be a lack of support. But surely no organization would attempt this. There is ample evidence that the public will support a really good program which is properly presented. To illustrate this by a few figures from our own agency, showing the changes in the past nine years:

In 1938 there were 47.5 children for each caseworker. By 1947 this had been reduced to 27 children per caseworker.

What had been the effect of these improved standards?

The total budget increased 255%, since this was a period of rising prices and wages. Our casework cost increased 367%. Our income from Chests and direct

gifts increased 341%. Our 1947 income from direct gifts alone was more than the 1938 total of direct gifts and Chest allotments.

People are interested, or can be interested in the standards of care given children. There is probably no other way in which their attention can be so readily attracted. To give another example:

Fifteen years ago there was an institution for children in Seattle. It was operated with a skeleton staff, the food cost was very low, and the building, which was good, was overcrowded. It had one of the lowest per capita costs in the city. Following a survey it was decided that its old-type operation should be discontinued. Instead, it was reorganized as an institution for emotionally disturbed children. This was done with considerable publicity as to the type of agency it was to become. The number of children was reduced. Standards were improved immeasurably, and the agency undertook its new job. The current cost for institutional care in this agency is nearly \$200 per child-month.

The community does not resent this expense. The agency is almost entirely supported by the Chest, and is one of the agencies which is most frequently mentioned in local Chest campaigns. No agency ever gets all the money it could use, but this one has had relatively little trouble with Chest budget committees. The executive is unusually capable in interpretation, and the community is generally aware of the fact that it has an agency which offers help to children in much more than a material way. In my opinion, the community would be quite willing to approve a higher cost if it were shown to be needed.

Another example of the interest of people in children comes from the state agency in Washington. Our last legislature was conservative. In spite of higher living costs, only 8% more money was appropriated for public assistance than was spent in the previous biennium. Thirty-six per cent more was appropriated for ADC and Child Welfare Services. I believe this shows the importance placed by the general public on providing really adequate care for children. Why were our agencies formed? It was because people were not satisfied with the sort of care children had been given. These people felt that children deserved better care, and should be given it. They thought they knew how children could be given better care, and they told their friends and neighbors about it.

Were these founders concerned primarily about the cheapest way of caring for children? No, except that they were concerned that value should be received for money spent. Almost every change in child care

methods has been from a less expensive to a more expensive type of care. The important consideration has been that children should be given good care, according to the best standards known at the time. Each organization which was formed represented service and increased expense for children.

Relationship of Cost to Standards

There is a fundamental point concerning the relationship of costs to standards, and it is that if we spend money with reasonable prudence, and tell people why we are spending money that way, and why children need to have the things we are spending the money for, we need not worry unduly about getting the money for support. The service justifies the cost, but no service can be justified by the fact of its cost alone, no matter how small that cost. The service to be rendered is the beginning of an agency, the lack of service given is the end of an agency. We are each at some point between these two extremes.

Where is your agency? The Board, executive and staff of any agency need to ask themselves this question from time to time. Cost studies may furnish clues to whether your standards are probably dissimilar from those of other agencies in the same area

of service. After those differences are found, the real questions arise: Is money being spent needlessly, or do higher expenditures represent needed service to children which some agencies do not supply adequately?

In the last analysis, only the agency can answer that question, because it depends partly on attitudes, and only in part on a question of fact. What is a needless expense depends often on the attitude of the person who is talking about it.

If you really try to operate your agency for the purpose for which it was founded, you will be trying to give children the best care you can. If your agency is operating to carry out the program for which it was founded, you will find that it may cease to be useful, and your agency will disappear. Pride in the past may be either an expression of maturity or senility. It need not develop into a form of ancestor worship, either with people or agencies.

The Trustees and staff of your agencies must know whether their services have kept up with the times, or whether they are living on borrowed time, resting on a reputation that is no longer justified. And they must know two facts. Costs can be justified by service. Nothing can justify a lack of service.

The Child Placing Agency and the Court*

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The thesis of this paper is that, in some instances, a child placement agency is in a better position to help a child or parent use the placement service if the parent has been relieved of the initial responsibility of deciding that placement is necessary and for how long.

CHILD placing agencies have long been accustomed to the type of situation in which the court orders commitment of a child to the agency because of the inadequacy of the home. These cases present many problems because of the parent reaction to the authority which has taken away his child, although the agency is not directly involved in this reaction and has taken no initiative in causing it. There are some situations in which the agency might actually see value in court control. On other occasions the agency may either seek to involve the court or permit this involvement when it might be avoided.

There are both parents and children who become so involved in their own ambivalent feelings toward

each other—that we might term their possessive hate—that they at once want and fear separation. When such a relationship verges on the pathological, when it becomes apparent that in continuing to live together they may precipitate great emotional damage, it is important that there be some force which can institute the separation with authority and set a period of time during which the child and parents may try to work out their difficulties.

Enforced separation is a painful thing and neither social worker nor judge should consider it without a full awareness of this pain and of the resulting damage. It is important to remember that inadequate as an own home may be, a substitute may have other inadequacies without the tremendous compensation for the child of belonging. There are also many situa-

* Selected from a group of papers submitted for delivery at National Conference of Social Work, April, 1948.

tions in which a child would be unable to bear separation, and might break under the strain. Authoritative placement, which is placement through the court, is like radical surgery. It is of value only when we are convinced that nothing else can succeed at a given point in a child's life.

This type of placement, in which the court takes responsibility for the decision, may be of value to the parent, to the child, or to both. One situation in which both found real value in the court action came to the Jewish Child Care Association* originally through a child guidance agency where nine-year-old Sylvia had been treated for more than a year. Sylvia was an attractive and precocious child who already had learned to make a conscious effort to be charming and to win people to her. A severe neurotic pattern was precipitated by the sudden death of her father. This was evidenced by Sylvia's tremendous anxiety about her mother. She was afraid that if she were to leave her to go to school, some calamity would occur in her absence. The guidance agency had found it impossible to treat Sylvia while she remained at home. Although her mother made a conscious effort to cooperate with the agency, her own emotional disturbance was so deep that she was unable to help the child, and her continuing rejection seemed to involve Sylvia even more deeply.

The mother had received very little love in her own life, and Sylvia had been her rival for the attention and affection of the father. The mother now continued to vie with the child for the attention of everyone whom they met.

The child's refusal to attend school caused the truant officer to consider court action, but he postponed this plan when a recommendation for placement was made by the psychiatrist of the guidance agency. Sylvia at first responded very enthusiastically to the idea, fantasizing about the institution to which she would go, and seeing placement as a glorified vacation from which she could return at will as she had done the preceding summer when she had gone to camp.

Sylvia's mother wanted her to go away. The child's clinging to her, and the constant scenes as they fought for control of each other, made her life almost unbearable. She urged immediate placement, feeling that she could not continue in this way for another day. Because she was unable to take responsibility for this placement she sometimes expressed the opinion that the child actually belonged in a state

*The JCCA is a child placing agency in which a centralized Intake Department serves two institutions, foster homes and an after-care program.

hospital and at other times in a reform school rather than a children's institution.

Sylvia began to see that placement really meant being away from her mother for an indefinite period of time and having to make new adjustments, which is difficult. She began to be afraid and attempted to put off going away. She saw her failure to attend school as one of the factors in the decision to place her, and would repeatedly assure everyone that she would go the following day. However, she was unable to go through with this. She would fight furiously when her mother attempted to force her to go to school. When actually led to the building by the truant officer, she would remain for a short time, and feel impelled by her anxiety to return home.

Because of the degree of Sylvia's disturbance, it seemed advisable for the JCCA psychiatrist to see her and evaluate her ability to adjust to placement in the institution. The child, who had now developed a close relationship with the caseworker, would show some insight about the need for going away and would agree to go to the doctor. However on each occasion when an appointment was made she would again create a scene with her mother and refuse to go. She finally agreed to go if accompanied by both her mother and the caseworker. It was the psychiatrist's opinion that placement was indicated.

These delays consumed a good deal of time. The mother continued to insist that the child should be removed immediately, but refused the interim shelter placement which was offered to her. She apparently derived a neurotic satisfaction from the repeated violent physical conflicts between her and her daughter; and Sylvia also was quite pleasurably excited by these scenes. Meanwhile the Bureau of Attendance continued to postpone court action at the request of the agency since they agreed that it would be desirable if placement could be effected without exposing Sylvia and her mother to a court experience.

Sylvia's next step was to meet the social worker who was to accompany her to the institution. She went as far as the railroad station on the day she was to leave but let two trains depart without her. Each time she promised to go, yet at the last moment she refused to board the train. Throughout this, her mother angrily expressed her desire to be rid of Sylvia. It became evident that Sylvia would not go voluntarily. Shelter care was suggested but after a great deal of physical violence toward the child, her mother refused shelter placement and agreed to take Sylvia home for the time being.

It became clear that this child was destroying herself in this violent and unsatisfactory relationship yet she could not free herself sufficiently to leave voluntarily. Her mother was too involved in her own intense negative feelings to help her to leave without outside authority. The Bureau of Attendance was notified of Sylvia's refusal to go to the institution and court action was immediately undertaken with a plan for commitment.

Sylvia was extremely disturbed on learning this, and telephoned to assure the worker of her willingness to go at any time rather than appear in court. However it was felt that even if this child were now able to go of her own volition, it would be almost impossible for her to remain, or for her mother to permit her to remain. Neither of them was actually able to resolve this mingled love and hate to the degree where they could take responsibility for parting, and both of them would undoubtedly find some peace of mind in no longer being required to make the decision about living together. The agency therefore permitted court action to proceed. Following the hearing Sylvia left willingly with the worker whom she had previously refused to accompany.

This resolution of the conflict was satisfactory to her because she herself had not brought it about. It was satisfactory to her mother because a force which she could not resist had taken away her child. The plan for Sylvia could no longer be influenced either by the mother's feeling of guilt or the child's pleas. On this basis, both of them could begin to accept placement, and to mobilize themselves for it. As time went on Sylvia was able to adjust to the institution, to attend school regularly, and to take psychiatric help. Her mother began to show some awareness of herself as a person and to imagine something in her life beyond this one all-consuming relationship with her daughter.

Another situation in which the agency was instrumental in involving the court concerned a boy of about Sylvia's age who had been, for two years, in a state mental hospital. Arthur was now considered ready for discharge but not well enough to return to a very troubled home. His mother was an extremely dull and disturbed person for whom a dominating mother had arranged a marriage with a completely inadequate husband. Arthur was a bright sensitive child. His grandmother wanted to manage him as she had managed her daughter, and attempted to take control of every detail of his life. She supervised his meals, planned his recreation, visited the school to talk to his teacher. This was greatly resented by his mother, and in time Arthur became so severely

affected by these cross-currents of emotion that he required care in a mental hospital.

During his stay in the hospital he continued to be torn between his mother and his grandmother to the degree where it was often necessary to prohibit visiting. Each visit by either woman would end in a hysterical scene. Each pressed him to decide which one of them he loved best; each claimed him for vacations at her home. The vacation, whether with mother or grandmother, would be prolonged far past the time set by the hospital, and invariably Arthur regressed after each experience. The grandmother spoke often of obtaining legal custody of the child. The hospital however felt that because of her tremendous feeling of guilt at her daughter's marriage, she was almost as upsetting to Arthur as was her daughter. Throughout all of this turmoil, Arthur's father remained passive and noncommittal.

The entire family agreed to placement. They were naturally eager to have Arthur considered well enough to leave the hospital, even if he were not permitted to come to either of them. However neither the mother nor the grandmother was really ready to accept any of the conditions of placement. They quarrelled in the office of the agency, both seeking to exclude the other from the discussion about placement. The mother insisted that she would take Arthur home after a month at the institution. The grandmother also insisted on having him with her. Both of them attempted to involve the worker in machinations designed to estrange the child from the other. Although the grandmother was more adequate than the mother, she was equally without insight where Arthur was involved.

It became apparent that this family was not ready to take responsibility for planning with the agency in the interest of the child. They saw placement only as a very short interim experience enabling them to remove the child from the control of the hospital. In discussing Arthur's period of hospitalization, the hospital staff spoke of the many difficulties which were caused by the total inability of either of these women to realize her role in the child's illness, and to relinquish any part of her need to possess him completely.

The constructive use of placement involves the family's understanding of the need to have the child away from home, their willingness to help the child to accept this, and their ability to work with the agency to make it possible for the child to return to a better home situation. Since all of these conditions were lacking, the agency had real question about its

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The Role of Board Members in Social Action*

THE National Conference of Social Work has been discussing social action at its annual meetings for nearly forty years. During that period, social action has been variously defined. One may review the proceedings of the Conference and take his choice of definitions if he wishes, although the serious searcher for the light will regard the discussion and analysis of recent years as the most pertinent and fruitful.

For our purposes in this discussion, I suggest that we view social action as the process of analyzing a social problem and recording our suggestions and convictions with relation to its solution, at the points and with the individuals or groups where it will do the most good.

It might well be added that social action is most effective when undertaken by people who know the problem involved at firsthand and who are skilled in the art of presenting their convictions and suggestions.

In the sense that I am using the term, social action is not to be confused with mere pressure or ordinary propaganda. Pressure groups have come into disfavor in recent years largely because of the tactics many of them employ and because the members of such groups are frequently motivated by purely selfish objectives. *Social* action, on the other hand, carries the implication of being motivated by societal concerns and considerations and directed to the benefit of the community as a whole. Those who are involved in social action, therefore, have the same professional and ethical responsibilities that bind the scientist in his pursuit of the truth as he sees it and the presentation thereof to the community.

What, then is the responsibility of the modern social agency board member in social action? Does he have any business in this sphere of activity? Can he be effective in it? How cautious should he be, or

how bold? And on what general or specific issues should he be active? These questions should be examined in the light of history and the changing role of the boards of social agencies over the last fifty or seventy-five years.

In the early days of organized social work, board members carried the entire responsibility for what is now referred to as the professional function, as well as those functions now regarded as belonging exclusively to the board. With the advent of professional education in social work and the recognition of the administrative role as related to but differing from the role of the board, there occurred a decided shift in the function of boards. Gradually, but surely, boards moved from personal attention to individual children in a child welfare agency, let us say, to broad policy affecting large numbers of children; and from direct administration of an agency to the task of creating with the executive a desirable framework or atmosphere within which a technical staff could work effectively in carrying out the functions of the agency; from direct operation to the task of interpretation—interpreting the agency to the community and the community to the agency.

With the development of federated financing, furthermore, board members were able to relinquish their money-raising functions. As competition for funds decreased, attention to program planning and co-ordination has increased. Hence, the modern concept of the board function is that of policymaking, interpretation (not only of the agency but of social work as a whole), providing leadership with relation to the pattern and development of social work and social agency relations and in movements and programs designed to promote the purposes of a specific agency and all social and health agencies in the community; keeping standards and quality of service at a high level and giving attention to a more adequate coverage of social services in the community. In other words, the function of board members has changed from that of operators to that of the social engineer and strategist.

Social action, it seems to me, represents a new frontier for boards of trustees of social agencies, quite in line with the role of the engineer and strategist, founded upon and emerging from the historic role of boards. Boards have given attention to the individual problems of children and families; they must now focus their attention more directly on the *causes* of such problems. *Why* do children become dependent and delinquent? *Why* do families disintegrate? The causes of social maladjustment are varied, complex and multitudinous. They operate in different com-

* Digest of talk at Annual Meeting, Child Welfare League of America, Inc., Atlantic City, April, 1948.

binations with respect to the individual and the environment involved.

We have only scratched the surface in determining and controlling causes, but we do know some basic things. We know that disease is a natural ally of maladjustment and that health is essential to the good life. We know that slums decrease, rather than increase, the chances of family stability. We know that play in unwholesome surroundings and hazardous work under dangerous conditions take their toll of childhood. Board members of child welfare agencies have a real and unique obligation, therefore, to analyze the forces and factors that operate in bringing children to the attention of agencies and to do what they can to stem and eradicate adverse and destructive influences and conditions. To do this requires a research point of view and a scientific frame of mind. It requires courage and unending patience. It requires skill in the art and process of social action.

The board that accepts this challenge will find itself supporting appropriate legislation designed to improve housing in the localities from which its children come. It will support measures which it believes to be sound, aimed at a more adequate distribution of medical care. It will stand firmly against violation of child labor laws. It will in short go to the heart of those basic problems which it knows affect adversely the lives of all children.

This story is told:

A physician in an industrial town found by careful study that its main source of water supply was polluted and so tried to inform the community of this grave hazard. But those who operated the water concession silenced him. For a time he treated the cases of typhoid which resulted, keeping his counsel and sticking to his job of healing. Finally, he could keep quiet no longer and, throwing caution to the winds, spread his story on the front pages of the newspaper. But it was too late. Deaths had occurred and those who would have supported him earlier accused him now of bad faith. His former friends joined his opponents and he was driven from town discredited and disgraced as an "Enemy of the people."

Alert board members know at firsthand and by actual experience of the sources of community pollution. A study of the case records of any agency will reveal such sources to the uninformed. An honest effort to achieve a statesmanlike grasp of social action and its philosophy and methods will provide an effective instrument whereby board members may come into their maturity as crusaders and social engineers in behalf of all children.

T. V. Smith of the University of Chicago has said that no citizen has the right to impose his private conscience on the whole community. He may think what he will, but he cannot and he must not make the community think precisely as he does. He points out that the honest politician acts as a midwife in transposing the private consciences of many citizens into public policy for all citizens. The good politician and lawmaker modifies, compromises and reconciles until workable policies and plans are devised and applied.

The professional social worker cannot impose on the community his ideals and his objectives, as sound and desirable as they may be. He needs the channel and instrument of the board, its judgment and balance, its transmitting and transmuting function. Thus, the main and initiating responsibility in social action should rest with the board. The board is a part of the community, but a very special part. It is an informed and knowledgeable part, a strategic part and it is vested with both responsibility and power.

Any board of trustees with a knowledge of those factors that affect the lives of children adversely must speak and act or be untrue to its mandate. I salute all of you who have spoken and acted in behalf of children in this manner. Your presence at this meeting and at this Conference is heartening to all of us. May you go forward with renewed courage and fresh determination. Yours is a sacred obligation and a high trust.

LEONARD W. MAYO

Setting the Fee in a Day Nursery

A discussion of the use of the fee as an introduction to casework services in a day nursery

HELEN WALLERSTEIN

Family Service Association of Trenton, New Jersey

WHILE fee setting is not in itself casework, it may become a very useful part of the casework process in a given setting, as proved in a recent experience in two day nurseries in Trenton. In the past, both of these nurseries had from time to time been furnished caseworkers by the Family Service

Association. But for a period of some months and until the end of September of this year there had not been a worker in either nursery, so that the present population had for the most part not had the benefits of casework service. Both nurseries were aware of this gap in their program and were urgently request-

ing a renewal of the service. While the two nurseries are separate and autonomous institutions, each with its own board, director and staff, the experience described here took place simultaneously in each. It might be said that while the neighborhoods and the industries which these nurseries served differ, the people who use the nurseries are fairly similar. In both districts they are largely of Italian extraction, usually first generation American-born, with an occasional mixture, such as Dutch-Italian, French-Italian (war brides), and English-Italian. There are also a number of families of Slavic extraction with intermarriage here too. The nursery children are in the main first children of young couples. Many fathers are veterans bent on getting established at a time when one income does not cover the needs of the family. There are of course younger children of larger families and a number of children from broken homes.

The Introduction of the Caseworker

It had been understood when the caseworker started in the nurseries that a new fee scale was urgently needed and it had been agreed that until the new scale was ready the caseworker would make no attempt to work with the families then using the nurseries except where specific problems arose. However, it took some weeks actually to work out a satisfactory scale. New admissions were told, at the time the fee was set, that this was temporary, and that a revision was in process. This delay was all to the good. It gave the new worker an opportunity to get to know the nursery setting and, through her work with new applicants, the group who were interested in nursery care. Even the parents who had no direct contact with her did become familiar with her presence, a first step in acceptance. After the new scale had been worked out, a letter was sent to all parents. It was signed by the nursery director, and explained that the caseworker would soon be seeing them to discuss the new fee scale, which, the letter said, was felt to be on a fairer basis. At the same time this would give the worker a chance to know the parents and to talk with them about any concerns they had.

There had been some question about mentioning the new fee scale as the purpose of the interview, but we decided to do so on the basis of its providing a reality for this interview and our agreement that a frank statement of purpose made for a better relationship. One reason for not having gotten to know the parents who were already using the nursery any sooner was the lack of a tangible basis for a casework relationship.

The Parents' Response

The response of the parents to this method was proof of the pudding, if any were needed. Some were naturally fearful and a few, especially at the start, a little resistive, as was to be expected. For some reason, revision of fees carries an implication of revision upward. One is not expected to revise fees down, especially in these times when everything is going up. Actually revisions took place in both directions, though many more went up than down, and a considerable number remained the same. But our concern here is not with what happened about the fees; rather it is with what happened between worker and client, as a result of these discussions.

It must be remembered that usually the parent, or parents, came in tired after work, with a child at the knee or waiting in the room beyond. The first necessity was to establish ease. The caseworker at once assumed that they knew the purpose of this appointment, and expressed her pleasure at this opportunity to get to know the parents of the children who were already in the nursery. It gave them a chance to know her, too, a desirable factor, since she was now a part of nursery. She made it clear what they were now paying might go up, or down. She then painstakingly explained how the new fee scale worked. In mentioning the maximum, she pointed out that it represented the total cost of care for the child in the nursery and that the amount they would be expected to pay was related not only to their income but to size of family and its expenditures as well as to this total cost of care. This led to a discussion of jobs, earnings, family setup and budget. The worker also had at hand a table recently worked up by a local state department showing cost-of-living figures on a minimum non-relief basis. These were not general but related specifically to families similar to their own. They were naturally interested in seeing how these figures compared with their own incomes, and they were usually quick to grasp that it was reasonable to relate the fee to the differences between their income, their minimum needs and the cost of nursery care.

In a discussion of such intimate topics as family budgeting, family situations were soon revealed. It should be said that the majority of these young families were, shall we say, "normal" groups; such problems as existed were likely to be in the realm of housing, tensions caused by living with relatives, necessity of buying homes before they were financially ready. The conflict in the interview, where there was any, had to do with the amount of fee to be paid. Perhaps because of the method in presenting it, in a remarkably large number of instances the fee set

was acceptable, but occasionally a father returned later, bringing his wife because she was more familiar with expenditures, or a wife came back with her husband, for more clarification. There were changes where such were indicated, and the caseworker was as ready to yield as was the parent.

Case Illustrations

Discussions of this sort were in themselves the beginning of a relationship which could go on, when and as indicated. But when Mrs. M. came in to keep her appointment, saying that she was hurried since she was on her way to take some clothes to her husband who was that day coming out of the "workhouse," the interview was no longer the simple question of setting a fee even though Mrs. M. was ready to settle the matter at once and have done with it. The caseworker's explanation that the fee was related to family circumstances and that a situation such as she was mentioning, when taken into consideration, seemed at once to enable her to pause in her flight, at least to the extent of permitting the discussion to have some real significance. She was now able to express her very mixed feelings about the return of her husband to the home. The caseworker recognized that this was a difficult problem that Mrs. M. was going to have to meet. The need to terminate this interview quickly was real. But the agreement with Mrs. M. to a temporary reduction in the fee, based on present earnings, was not only concrete recognition of her situation; it was also recognition of the need for further interviews. In part, Mrs. M.'s haste had been a desire to escape; she now readily made an appointment for a further interview with some understanding that while the decision as to what she was going to do in her marital situation was hers, it was one in which help was available. Although the final setting of the fee was the worker's responsibility, it was related to how she and her husband worked out this problem. The father, as well as the mother, had a responsibility to the nursery and the nursery had to work with each.

Again, in setting a fee with an Australian war bride, her total rejection by her husband's family was revealed, when she explained that if she moved, as she hoped to, if only a place could be found, her expenses would be much higher. The explanation here to Mrs. B. and her husband, who "sided with her," that while finding a place was something they themselves would have to do, the caseworker could go along with them to the extent of an adjustment in fee in recognition of increased expenses. It seemed to give the B.'s a real impetus to move out of their

unhappy situation. This was not, of course, due to the anticipation of a fee reduction, which could be a minimum amount at best. It stemmed rather from her acceptance of them and their predicament and as evidenced concretely by the nursery policy to adjust the fee accordingly. Mrs. B. fairly glowed on the day she came in to keep the appointment which she herself had asked for, and announced that she had two rooms of her own. The details of going over her new budget and working out the new fee in accordance with it became a part of this new experience.

A more difficult situation was that of an older woman whose husband was being refused readmission to this country. He had returned to his native Germany at the height of the Hitler regime, and since he was not an American citizen, and had joined the Nazi party, his chances of rejoining his wife and children were slim. In the interview, Mrs. H. showed great feeling of guilt about the small fee she paid, and when the discussion revealed that even this was more than she could afford on the basis of the scale, her inability to accept a reduction clearly brought out some of the conflict from which she suffered; her inability to accept the fact that she and her husband were not likely to be reunited, her suspicion that there were forces playing against her, her fears for the mental health of her oldest adolescent child. Her anxiety was so great and her concentration on the immediate problem of her husband's return so engrossing, that the caseworker attempted, in this first interview, only to handle this problem with her. She eagerly responded to the caseworker's offer to get in touch with the agency where help in problems of immigration might be had. Her participation in this by bringing in all the necessary papers and helping to prepare the necessary data, was the first step in establishing a relationship. Her ability to deal responsibly and realistically with the question of her husband's return enabled her to handle some of the other problems which at this point she could hardly recognize.

The cases cited all happen to point at least to a temporary reduction in fee, but casework help also came into play when there was a question of a rise in fee. There were several cases where a better understanding of the meaning of nursery care resulted in a consequently better relation to the nursery. Mrs. M. wanted Sandy in the nursery but felt that she was meeting her obligation when she met the small fee regularly. She could not accept the need for a change, nor did the caseworker's careful explanation of cost of care in the nursery as related to her family setup and budget help. She went away believing

that the caseworker was taking an arbitrary stand, but did respond to the suggestion that she return with her husband. He was at once interested in analyzing the family budget and participated eagerly in the comparison with cost-of-living figures, making explanations to his wife in Italian. He expressed the opinion that the nursery fee was fair now that he understood how it was arrived at, and grasped that the fee had some relation to cost of nursery care. They were now both able to explain their resistance to an increase, as based on fear that they would not be able to meet the increased fee in case of illness or unemployment such as they experienced the previous year. Since they saw how the fee was related to all these matters, they felt they would be free at any time to come in and go over any change in their situation with the worker.

One final case will perhaps sum up better than further discussion how, since there had been no casework relationship before this, a consideration of the fee was the way of introducing casework service.

Mrs. G. hurried in, ten minutes late, to meet the worker for her fee discussion. She was an extremely pretty young woman, a girl really, and even in her obvious distress there was a certain swagger to her slack-clad figure. She threw herself into the chair beside the worker's desk and apologized for being late. Then she burst into tears and said that she had just come from the Welfare Department where she had been to see if she could get support for her child from her husband. After making clear that in spite of a married life that had for months been a continuous uproar, this was the first agency contact that she had ever made, she lapsed into troubled silence. The caseworker could see that this had been a difficult experience and wondered how she had been meeting her present fee under the circumstances. This helped Mrs. G. to focus on the nursery. She said that although her husband had been away for five weeks, and she had not received a cent from him, she had not asked for a reduction because she was ashamed to let the nursery know that they were separated again. Her earnings were moderate, her living expenses high, but she had continued to pay the set amount regularly. This led into a discussion of her situation as it was related to the fee. There seemed no point in reviewing all that she had just been through with the worker at the Welfare Department, but the main facts of her unhappy married life, her bitterness toward her husband, his disregard of her and "my Frank" as she referred to her son, of necessity came out. It was evident, too, that she was in great conflict as to what her next step should be. She

both feared and hoped that the Welfare Department worker would attempt to effect a reconciliation. At this point the caseworker's only concrete participation was to change the fee, based on Mrs. G.'s immediate situation. Since this was in such a state of fluctuation, it was agreed that Mrs. G. would come in at stated intervals for the time being. She was regular in keeping her appointments, and seemed to look forward to them. At the end of a few weeks she reported listlessly that her husband was back. He claimed to have an injured leg, was not working, and consequently contributing nothing; he was indeed an added expense. She did not see how she could increase the fee, and this troubled her. There was some discussion of her husband's responsibility toward Frank. The caseworker explained that it was usual for the worker to see the father as well as the mother. Mrs. G. was certain he would not come in. If she approached the subject he might leave again. She then spoke of her lack of any real affection for Mr. G., her abhorrence of the position she was put in by him and his family—"nothing but a 'doormat' really"—her inability to assert herself, her fear of what people would say if, for instance, she went to the movies alone. The caseworker wondered how important this was, and Mrs. G. agreed, acknowledging that it was only part of her uncertainty. Her ambivalence was so evident at every turn that the caseworker remarked, "You're just one big question mark, aren't you, Mrs. G.?" making the sign with her finger. This brought quick laughter from Mrs. G. She got the point and took it up, using the term herself, acknowledging that only she could make the decision. This was a real gain for Mrs. G., who until now had been floundering around for rescue. It was agreed that the fee would remain the same for the time being. Two weeks later she came in again, prompt for her appointment. It so happened that another mother had asked to see the worker in an emergency. Observing this, Mrs. G. said, "I won't keep you long this time!" Her whole appearance was different. She sat erect in her chair, she seemed sure of herself, and at one point volunteered the information that she now felt sure. She very quickly related that two days after the last interview Mr. G. left. As usual he was preparing to go out, and Mrs. G. had announced that it was up to him to take her and Frank along. He had then packed his things and gone. She had at once called the Department of Welfare, as she wanted support for Frank, but has heard nothing yet. But she was done; her plans were made. Her married sister who now lives with their mother is building a home. Mrs. G. would remain where she is until this home was ready. Then

her sister will leave and she will move into her mother's house. Until then, or at least until she can get some support from her husband, she could not increase the fee. She said this easily and without conflict. Once the new arrangements went through, and her expenses were reduced, she would be ready to rediscuss the fee. "I'm a different person, my Frank's a different person, he doesn't hear arguing all the time, he eats." Then she added that always before this she had thought it a disgrace to discuss her troubles with anyone. Now she knew that it could help.

Throughout these interviews, the fee was the pivotal point in the relationship between Mrs. G. and the worker. But the direct relation to her situation was pointed out by the caseworker at every turn and accepted by Mrs. G. In this way these discussions, though stemming from the concern with the fee, helped Mrs. G. to focus on her situation and her responsibility in it. The fee was something to take hold of. Mrs. G. had the strength to use the casework help offered in this way to bring about a change, not only in herself, but in the responsible way in which she was able to deal with her situation.

Participation by the parents in examining the family budgetary needs as a basis for setting the fee directed attention also to the reason for the need for the nursery service, that is, on the immediate problems of the parent and his child which brought them to the nursery. Where this touched a sore spot, a point of conflict, the opportunity for further casework service could be made available. The nursery worker is necessarily aware of the limitations imposed by the nursery setting and where the problems presented by the parents and the kind of help indicated go beyond this, referral to family agency, other child care agency, the public agency, can be made.

The illustrations cited, however, were those which demonstrated how some clients got enough help to become more free to take responsibility for dealing with some of their problems on a more realistic basis.

Adoption Conference, May 19 to 21

Seventy-five delegates of League member agencies participated in a nation-wide study of policies, procedures and practices in adoption. Ten state departments of public welfare and forty private agencies, which had replied to a questionnaire, participated. Four workshops considered: 1. services to the natural parents; 2. services to the child; 3. services to the adopting parents; and 4. administrative problems including laws which affect adoption practice. Problems of fee charging and of cooperation between the medical, legal and social work profession were considered.

A comprehensive report will be available at a later date.

The Child Placing Agency and the Court

(Continued from page 7)

ability to be of help to Arthur. There seemed little possibility of the mother's modifying her behavior toward him. Her only desire was to have him at home and prevent his grandmother's seeing him. The grandmother wanted legal custody of the boy so she could take him to live in another community where his parents could never see him. She had no thought for the meaning of such a separation to the child, who was keenly aware of the rivalry which surrounded him.

The agency and the hospital agreed that it would be best if the hospital took this case to children's court to ask that Arthur be committed to the agency. It was felt that only if these disturbed people could accept some degree of authority could they begin to understand the child's need for emotional security. The need for court action was discussed with the family by the hospital and by the placement worker. Both mother and grandmother responded to this suggestion by a flaring up of their hitherto more or less repressed hostility toward each other. This in itself was a healthy thing, for it made it possible for the placement worker to handle these reactions and to embark on a far more realistic discussion of the goals of placement.

Both mother and grandmother were genuinely startled by the judge's summation of his findings, and by his decision for authoritative placement. It was a shock for the mother to hear him say that she would be unable to take her child home in the near future, and for the first time she began to realize the possible effect of her behavior on her son. The grandmother too was forced to a realization of what it meant to Arthur to hear his parents criticized and to know of her efforts to take him from them. She finally admitted her awareness of how disturbed Arthur had been following his last vacation with her. She realized, too, how heavy a burden she placed on him by expecting him to make a choice between her and his mother.

The family began to see that placement might mean a step toward normalcy for Arthur, and also an opportunity for them to take some help with their way of relating to Arthur and to each other.

In both of these situations the fact that the court took over the responsibility for placement gave it a meaning for the family which apparently stemmed directly from the court experience. In Sylvia's case, both she and her mother were relieved at having this decision taken out of their hands. Sylvia was aware of her destructive behavior, but was utterly powerless to halt herself. The unhappiness of the court

experience was more than balanced by the comfort of knowing that she could not continue in her disastrous path but would have to leave home and try to work through some of her difficulties. Her mother was at the point where her only satisfaction lay in her battles with Sylvia. She, too, had sufficient strength to want to extricate herself from this unhealthy situation and begin to function more normally. Only at a distance could these two people begin to work out their neurotic involvement with each other. Neither of them had the strength to achieve this distance without an outside force.

In Arthur's situation, it was meaningless for the agency to tell the family of their part in placement, since these discussions obviously fell on deaf ears. It was tremendously disturbing to both the mother and grandmother to learn that the court had conviction that it would be harmful for Arthur to return to them, and had equal conviction about their need to relinquish some of their hold on him if he were not to be utterly destroyed. These two women, who had always been rivals, for the first time shared equally in an experience. Although it was a negative one it made it necessary for them to recognize that they were equally at fault and to accept the reality of the meaning of each of them to the child.

It is important for the agency to use experiences with the court constructively in the interest of parents and children. Court action inevitably has a punitive aspect, and if this is the only aspect the worker uses with the family it will serve merely to heighten their anger and their need to cling to the unsuccessful pattern of the past. On the other hand, if the worker tends to gloss over the court experience or minimize the pain involved in it, nothing real will be accomplished.

The ultimate aim of most types of placement should be the reuniting of the family with a new ability to live together. Only if the court experience can be used toward this end should it be considered by the agency as a tool in placement. If the agency is convinced of the constructive purpose of involving the court, it is the worker's responsibility to discuss this with the family very concretely and to make it possible for the family to use the court experience positively in moving into placement.

New League Members

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE, INC.

313 Southeast Second Street
Evansville 9, Indiana
Miss Luna E. Kenney, Director

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ST. LOUIS

Department of Children
2331 Mullanphy Street
St. Louis 6, Missouri
Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Butler, President

MICHIGAN CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

Flint Branch
432 North Saginaw Street
Flint 3, Michigan
Mr. Stanley L. Venner, Executive Secretary

Reader's Forum

Dear Editor:

I was very interested in the article on "Supervision and Licensing of Child Caring Agencies" in the April BULLETIN. However, although Mrs. Fenske mentions the importance of a division between the authoritative and the educative role of the State Department, I feel that perhaps not enough stress has been laid on this. I wonder if our experience in Louisiana may be of some interest to other states?

Our Louisiana law has no "teeth" in it—that is, no penalties are prescribed for agencies who operate without a license. We hope eventually that we may have a law with teeth in it but believe that this must come from the agencies themselves when they are sufficiently accepting of the importance of licensing to want to make it impossible to operate without one.

Even though our law is, therefore, a voluntary one, we have discovered the necessity of having clear-cut minimum standards. This came about because we found that many agencies were genuinely in doubt as to whether a suggestion made in a licensing study was in effect a command affecting licensing status or just a friendly suggestion. We found too that suggestions were apt to be interpreted as commands and sometimes put into effect mechanically before their real purpose was understood. Beyond this, however, we did not feel it entirely consistent with what we think should be the relationship of an organ of State government to its citizens to exercise an undefined, persuasive, exhortatory, and sometimes, despite our best efforts, capricious or personal authority over the programs of private agencies.

At the time, therefore, that we issued our Minimum Requirements for License, we made a very clear distinction between the licensing role of our staff and their consultative capacity. Under this system, a local Consultant studies an agency and reports to its administration, measuring its performance point by point against the Minimum Requirements. This report is reviewed and approved by the agency before it is submitted to the Commissioner who then makes a decision on license entirely on the basis of the report. Actually, this report may be simply a "check list;" at the time that a study is begun, however, the Consultant and the agency discuss the scope of the study that the agency desires and the amount to which it would welcome advice and opinion on its program. In actual practice, most agencies have wanted much wider studies than the Minimum Requirements call for and have seemed to have been freer to ask for this when they knew that suggestions and opinions expressed in this way would have no effect on the actual granting of the license. Consultative and advisory material is presented in the study in a form clearly delineated from licensing material. The agencies also know that the Consultant, apart from her licensing function, is ready to stand by with advice and help at any time.

Our Minimum Requirements for License were issued in February, 1947. They were compiled with the help of committees from the agencies themselves. In little more than a year, we believe we have already enough material to show that the experiment is likely to be successful. Agencies feel much freer to discuss their problems now they know what the exact requirements are. Where they are not meeting Minimum Requirements—and our requirements are fairly high—they have been very eager to meet them. One of the areas in which there has been real advance during the year has been that of record keeping. Also, two new agencies have employed professional staff and a third has made arrangements for this service from a qualified children's agency (we require trained staff to make adoption placements). There has been greater freedom in seeking consultation and this has extended to consultation from the State Board of Health and the fire prevention authorities now that it is understood that their authority is restricted to the minimum requirements of the sanitary code or local fire preven-

tion ordinances but that they are willing to give as much more service as is requested of them.

At the time that we introduced our Minimum Requirements, the fear was very generally expressed that agencies would be content with these and would not be interested in improving their services further. We have found that in 90% of the cases agencies are eager to go beyond the Minimum Requirements which are proving steppingstones rather than limits to progress.

W. S. TERRY, JR.,

Commissioner of Public Welfare

By: (MRS.) EDITH G. ROSS,

Director of Local Welfare Services

BOOK NOTES

GROUP EXPERIENCE AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES. By Grace Coyle, The Woman's Press, N. Y. 180 pp. \$2.75.

The author has brought together a series of papers on the important contributions of organized groups to our contemporary society. That their great potential force as generators of the life stream of democratic principles in America has only begun to be consciously recognized is evident. The need for organization of groups is greater today than at any time in our history. This is due to the rise of great urban centers and the deadening effect of their impersonality on the individuals who comprise them. Due also to the extreme importance of inculcating the spirit of democracy (freedom) and the conscious active participation in democratic activity in every phase of American life. One realizes from this book that more than ever the never-ceasing struggle between oppression and freedom is in full force and that if America fails as the strongest champion for freedom the "superb adventure" of life may not endure. A half-awakened America scattering its forces as its individuals give apathetic lip service to belief in democratic ideals can never hope to withstand the oppressor. The force of dynamic groups putting ideals into action is our strongest weapon. Although the book is divided into three parts and includes among new material eight papers given at various social work conferences, there is one thread woven throughout which gives the book the firm fabric of its foundation—that democratic ideals must never be forsaken and that as they contribute to the growth and happiness of the individual, to that of the group, so must they eventually strengthen all of society.

Dr. Coyle's papers do not end with pointing up the value of and need for organized groups. Throughout she discusses in concrete terms the construction of the group, the purposes and programs, the value of the group to the individual, the value to the commu-

nity, and how, through the important functions of education and recreation groups can be the ramrods of constructive social action.

In the section treating on the use of voluntary organizations in a democratic society, stress is placed on developing of leadership (training and experience gained in small groups can be carried over constructively to groups of national scope) and on the interrelationships between lay members and professional workers.

The second section dealing with changing perspectives in group work points out the need for pioneers to fight for social reform, for the administrator to consolidate the gains and firmly establish the new social convention, and for the technician to develop methods and techniques to best do the job. How these functions have gradually developed sound philosophies and techniques are developed in the papers on the use of "Group Work as a Method in Recreation" (which is one and the same with informal education and the use of leisure time to prepare for active citizenship); on "Becoming Professional" (the professional qualifications and contributions of the group worker); on "The Function of the Social Settlement Today"; and on "The Values of Group Life for Teen-Age Youth." These papers will be of especial interest to child welfare workers for they so clearly bring into focus the tremendous values of the group for the individual as an instrument for developing personality, maturity, and happiness.

In the third section of the volume, Dr. Coyle has forcefully pointed up that social work has definite contributions to make to social action through some of its group work agencies which have a "fundamental belief that democracy cannot function without an enlightened and publicly active citizenry and that it is their responsibility, therefore, to encourage discussion of political, social and economic questions in which their clientele is inevitably involved."

Dr. Coyle has made a great contribution not only to the field of social work but to all society as well. It is a timely book which should find many readers among those people concerned with preserving democracy.

CLAIRE STONG NEWLON,

Seattle Children's Home, Seattle, Washington

THE CHILD AND HIS WELFARE. By Hazel Fredericksen, W. H. Freeman & Co., San Francisco. 328 pp. \$3.75.

The author states in the preface that the book is designated primarily for the use of college students. Its form is that of a textbook and at the end of each

chapter are valuable lists of suggested supplementary reading. A wealth of material is covered in the book on the different aspects of child welfare as the following chapter headings will indicate: Safeguarding Family Life, Guardianship and Protection, Substitute Care, Unmarried Parenthood and the Need for Special Services.

There is no special chapter in regard to children of minority groups as the author takes the wise viewpoint that all service promoting opportunities such as health, education and welfare should be equally available to all children regardless of race, creed or color.

Some historical material is included in several chapters to show how child welfare work evolved to its present status and some of the changes which have come about in our thinking and philosophy in children's work.

This reviewer believes that in the chapter on the evolution of child welfare work it would be helpful to have included the development of children's agencies on a county basis in New York State under private auspices which has set the pattern for making child welfare service available on a local basis. However, there is included in the suggested reading the U.S. Children's Bureau pamphlet No. 107 on County Organization for Child Care and Protection written by Emma O. Lundberg in 1922 which describes this development.

In Chapter VI, under the discussion of a public child welfare agency, an unfortunate omission was made, probably in the final draft, in that the word "financial" is omitted in the following sentence before the word eligibility—"They [meaning child welfare service] should be extended without the necessity of establishing eligibility and without court commitment," etc. I am sure the author intended to indicate that eligibility for child welfare service is always in terms of the child's need, not his financial situation.

The chapter on Foster Home Care includes some excellent material, including a section on the preparation of a child for placement in a foster home. This need to prepare a child for foster care is, of course, equally applicable to children placed in institutions but does not appear in the chapter Institutional Care.

This book will be useful to college students in that it presents the various aspects of child welfare and gives a brief outline of the general concepts and indicates where further information may be found.

GRACE REEDER, *Director,*
Bureau of Child Welfare,
State Department of Social Welfare, Albany, New York

LAW OF ADOPTION SIMPLIFIED. By Morton L. Leavy, Oceana Publications, 115 W. 42nd St., N. Y. C. 76 pp. \$1.00.

This is a short, almost pocket-size booklet which summarizes the legal procedures required to consummate adoptions. The information is grouped by states.

Mr. Leavy simplifies the study of the laws concerning adoptions, even if the laws themselves are not simple. He starts by describing in a few short and clear paragraphs the meaning of adoption. The next few paragraphs are entitled "Legal Assistance" and tell of the necessity of obtaining such legal assistance. Much to the surprise and approval of your reviewer, the author, himself an attorney, advises the reader to go for the necessary assistance either to an attorney or to a "licensed" agency. (Quotation marks are the reviewer's.) This advice, while unusual, is sound, as adoption agencies have a wealth of experience to draw from and usually have access to an attorney who has handled many similar problems.

The next paragraph summarizes the procedure as to adoption. Although this chapter takes only two short pages, Mr. Leavy has seen fit, and wisely, to devote more than half of that short space to the problem of obtaining the child, and the remaining lesser portion to the laws governing adoption. The balance of the booklet is a summary, by states, of the essential steps in the legal procedure with a brief introductory paragraph before each summary. This method of exposition makes it easy to study the state of adoption laws in the United States as a whole, or to locate easily and quickly the pertinent provisions of the law in any one state.

The booklet contains a supplement which sets forth the names and addresses of State Departments of Welfare and private authorized adoption agencies in each state. That a lawyer should see fit to provide this essential information in a short booklet on the laws of adoption is a very significant indication of the trend in adoptions. There is no doubt that all adoptions should be handled by social agencies. We require special skills in many fields—trained lawyers for legal problems, licensed electricians for the installation of electric wiring, but for a step which means a child's entire future, we permit the placement of children in adoptive homes by untrained and often ignorant people, frequently self-interested in consummating the placement whether good or bad.

Mr. Leavy should be congratulated for his brevity, clarity and vision.

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